

**NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2002-2003 APPLICATION**

Bergenfield HS

Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

Application Requirements:

1. **RESPONSES** to the information and the statements below must be **ANONYMOUS** and **ACCURATE**. No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in responding to the statements
2. **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM** on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4. Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
3. Applications must be typed on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used. This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.
4. Keyboarded responses to all the statements below must be no more than a total of four pages. Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for clarity.
5. **The information on page 4 and the responses** to statements must be copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
6. The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
7. **The original and seven copies of the application** must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by **December 15, 2002**, with the **Itemized List of District Applications** form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Breakfast with an Author</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Districts with Practice <u>0</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High School	<u>9-12</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and Equity Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages/Bilingual Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 2002 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

Since its inception in 1996, the Breakfast with an Author program has allowed this school's students to enjoy the privilege of meeting and interacting with published authors and artists in a variety of fields. The authors are sponsored by this town's local Council for the Arts, an organization committed to promoting artistic growth and awareness throughout the community. Authors are recruited through the cooperation of local bookstores and Rutgers University Press in New Brunswick. The town's Arts Council graciously purchases a copy of an interesting and appropriate book to be signed by the author and then donated to our high school library.

From October to May, students of all grades and ability levels voluntarily participate in an in-school field trip where they share breakfast and conversation with prolific authors in an informal workshop environment. The combination of intellectual exchange and relaxed atmosphere create a warm, but engaging experience for all who attend the event. We have been fortunate to attract successful authors from diverse backgrounds ranging from historical fiction to biography to children's literature. The program has evolved over the years and now incorporates other areas of the arts including acting, film production, screen writing and product promotion. Past visitors include a world-renowned journalist, soap opera actress, poetry performer and women's history writer. Workshop topics explored have focused on the writing process, language skills, oral communication, creativity, journalism, publishing, marketing and career paths.

According to the philosophy of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Language Arts Literacy, "as language arts skills spiral and become increasingly sophisticated, students progress through the grades with increased confidence and proficiency in oral and written language, comprehension and critical thinking skills. Language skills are essential to furthering learning communication, career development and the human spirit." (July 2002) The Breakfast with an Author program fosters an environment that supports the New Jersey philosophy. The primary goal of Breakfast with an Author is to broaden the educational experiences of students by providing them with cultural advantages they may not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy. The major objectives of the program are:

1. to promote lifelong learning
2. to further understanding of real life choices and consequences
3. to expose students to professional adult role models
4. to value volunteerism
5. to create a network of community artists
6. to enhance the community-school relationship
7. to strengthen student writing, reading and communication skills
8. to educate students on possible careers in the arts
9. to motivate students to improve their writing and artistic expression
10. to build confidence in both written and oral communication

This innovative program promotes student participation, literary exposure and community involvement. Students of all abilities are encouraged to participate. The format of the workshops varies. Students may participate in creative writing exercises, poetry readings or literary analyses. In the past, students have performed in impromptu skits with an accomplished actress. On another occasion, a filmmaker allowed students to preview a film in progress and provide constructive feedback. A journalist shared personal accounts of his global experiences and offered concise reporting advice to journalism students.

2. List the specific Core Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standards. Provide an example to substantiate your response.

The Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards addressed are as follows:

- 1.1 All students will develop career planning and workplace readiness skills.
- 1.2 All students will use information, technology and other tools.
- 1.3 All students will use critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving skills.
- 1.4 All students will demonstrate self-management skills.

Other standards addressed by academic and cross content areas are as follows:

Visual and Performance Arts Standards:

Students participate in a variety of artistic expressions including dramatic readings, video critiques and scene performances. In addition, students explore artists' personal histories and influences.

- 1.1 All students will acquire knowledge and skills that increase aesthetic awareness in dance, music, theater and visual arts.
- 1.3 All students will illustrate arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performance
- 1.4 All students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique.
- 1.5 All students will identify the various historical, social and cultural influences and traditions which have generated artistic accomplishments throughout the ages and which continue to shape contemporary arts.

Language Arts/Literacy Standards:

Students take part in creative writing exercises, poetry readings, literary analyses and picture prompts. They are part of an interactive exchange between their peers and the guest.

- 3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.
- 3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.
- 3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.4 All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.
- 3.5 All students will view, understand and use nontextual visual information.

Social Studies:

Guests have included women's historian, war-time researcher, New Jersey geographer and New Jersey memoir writer.

- 6.4 All students will acquire historical understanding of societal ideas and forces throughout the history of New Jersey, The United States and the world.
- 6.5 All students will acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, The United States and the world.

Since the artistic guests write and perform in a variety of areas, students are exposed to content that stretches across many disciplines. Many of our guests originate from the Tri-state area and have discussed how their socio-economic backgrounds and familial value systems influenced their interest in the arts. Our partnership with a community organization reinforces the necessity for schools and their communities to continue to bond together to strengthen the overall educational experience.

- 3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.**

Young adolescents of all ability levels must be presented with opportunities to broaden their cultural experiences in order to succeed in the global work community. Since our district is comprised of various socio-economic levels and foreign-born families, many students never experience artistic interaction such as a Broadway show, a museum, or even a library. The Breakfast with an Author program provides students with that necessary artistic exposure. Students themselves are seeing, hearing, and questioning published authors, television stars, film producers, and historians. They are learning to ask relevant questions, evaluate information, examine their life choices, and participate in meaningful dialogue. It is self-affirming for students to see such distinguished professionals volunteering their time to give advice, hope, and insight to young people. It speaks volumes about the nature of sharing and honoring one's community. Breakfast with an Author provides students the opportunity to learn from professionals in a variety of artistic fields without even leaving their high school.

Although the majority of our workshops are open to the entire student body, on occasion, the program targets specific interest classes such as drama, film, journalism or creative writing. These classes are chosen because a particular author's background coincides with their curriculum or current content of that class. When that happens, individual teachers plan a thematic lesson focused around the workshop. Teachers welcome the chance to bring this unique, life experience to their students. So, the best form of assessment is the feedback received from colleagues and students. English teachers have reported an increase in motivation among students that attended the program. Students' inhibitions toward writing assignments diminished as they approached tasks with renewed interest. Our school's journalism teacher personally acknowledged a positive change in his students who attended the workshops. The Drama/Acting teacher also commented on the enthusiasm of her students toward their scene readings. Students learn to ask relevant questions and provide constructive feedback – skills they take back to their classrooms.

Although peer feedback is both affirming and helpful, it is the students who express their thoughts about the program's success. Upon the conclusion of each workshop, students are asked to anonymously complete an assessment form for the day's event. The student response has been overwhelmingly positive. Students expressed interest in signing up for one of the many arts electives available at the high school. In fact, enrollment in electives such as Drama, Creative Writing and Journalism has increased significantly since the Breakfast with an Author program's inception. Class capacities were raised to accommodate student interest, and in some cases, additional sections of the course were added to the curriculum. Overall, students indicated their enjoyment at being able to communicate verbally with an accomplished artist. One student commented to our school newspaper that he was inspired to express himself as much as possible through his writing. (March 2002)

When the Breakfast with an Author program first began, the workshops were limited to 25 students and took place once or twice a year. Due to the high volume of interested students, the program has expanded over the years to admit as many as 35-40 students to allow for maximum participation. In addition, the workshops now occur once or twice a marking period. After receiving many write-ups in both county and local newspapers,

community interest in the program has risen. From this community awareness evolved a need for a position of a student liaison. This student attends monthly Council for the Arts meetings, assists in previewing the authors, and helps publicize the event for the student body. As a result of this voluntary role, the student acquires invaluable communication skills needed for college.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school/district.

Due to media coverage in several local newspapers, surrounding districts have expressed an interest in replicating the Breakfast with an Author program at their schools. In order for successful replication to occur, community cooperation is extremely important. Through networking, authors are contacted and recruited by our local Arts Council or by the program advisors. In our district, the artists agree to attend pro bono. If a district lacks a local council, a recruitment organization can easily be developed through parent and community volunteers.

Faculty advisors act as liaisons coordinating dates and location with the building principal and the school calendar. The advisors also conduct a preliminary interview with the selected guest. At that time, the advisors describe the program, agree upon a focus and coordinate activities the guest may want to conduct with students. In addition, a classroom or conference room environment that can accommodate the students and guests is needed. Our district uses a newly renovated multi-media room that has tiered seating and is equipped with a TV/VCR and computer technology. It has been our experience that the program works best when held for a minimum of one and an half hours to allow for students questions. Once a date is established, students are invited to participate. Posted signs, morning announcements and discussions in English classes all promote the featured guest. Students complete a school permission slip and obtain the appropriate signatures. The program is closed when the first 40 students return a completed permission slip.

Before the workshop, students attend a meeting held after school by the advisors. They are read a brief biography of the featured guest and often shown a sample of his work. Students are reminded of appropriate event behavior, told where to meet and what materials will be needed for the workshop.

On the day of the event, the author is met by the advisors, signed in as a visitor and escorted to the venue. Our cafeteria provides the breakfast of coffee, tea, bagels, muffins and juice. The school is billed for the expenses and the program must be budgeted for each year. This is a nominal cost of approximately \$50.00 for each event. Students are verified and choose their food as they enter the event. Once students are seated and attentive, the guest is introduced and the program begins. The workshops last approximately an hour and a half. At the program's conclusion, students anonymously complete a program assessment form and have the opportunity to engage in personal conversation with the guest. Many of the students have developed a meaningful dialogue with the guest and have been invited to continue a written or email correspondence. Once students are dismissed from the engagement, the advisors have the chance to exchange feedback about the program and review student assessment forms.